

Madam Speaker, this year a number of States are taking steps to make it more difficult for citizens to register to vote, to limit early voting, and to require photo IDs at the polls. The proponents of these new laws argue that they are designed to combat voter fraud. Clearly, we don't want people voting illegally, but these new laws are a solution to a problem that does not exist, and these steps will create serious problems.

A recent report by the Brennan Center at NYU shows that these new laws would affect more than 5 million eligible voters and would disproportionately disenfranchise young, low-income, and minority citizens.

In the past, literacy tests and poll taxes were used selectively to allow certain citizens to vote and disenfranchise others. They were and are illegal, and they should remain so. So we must oppose 21st century poll taxes which seek to suppress the vote of eligible voters and deny them their constitutional rights and weaken our democracy.